



# 3-4 AVN REGT Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 2

May 2006

## BATTALION COMMANDER

Comanche Pride! to the spouses, children, extended families and loved ones of our great battalion. I want each and every one of you to know what an exceptional job your forward deployed Soldiers, and Romeo Company Soldiers at Fort Hood are doing for our Nation. Your Comanche loved one answers the call to duty with exceptional vigor every second of the day, regardless of the unrelenting sun, no notice massive dust storms, and incredible mission tempo.

We thank all the family members for supporting this deployment in such an incredible manner. I know our Soldiers have missed family milestones and events that I can not give back. This is made easier knowing the importance of the mission they complete on a daily basis by establishing a secure environment for the free people of Iraq. The press does not scratch the surface of all the good your Soldier is doing here everyday. They have made an incredible difference as I see how this country has improved in my travels here in 1991, 2003 and 2006.

It is an honor to lead and serve such incredible Soldiers, and to see the support they receive from our families. To our families, your calmness and spirit, through and through, is an example of what makes our country great. When the going gets tough, the Army Soldier and Family are ready for the challenge! Your letters, packages, emails, thoughts and prayers energize our formation. Thank you.

As summer approaches, I ask that you reach out and communicate with our Company Family Readiness Groups (FRG) for information and support. If you depart the "Great Place" of Fortress Hood, please leave a contact phone number and email with your Company FRG Leader. Also, we wish you safe travels. Please take the time, don't rush during your vacation

travels, prepare your vehicles for the trips, and leave a trusted neighbor or friend to watch over your house or belongings at Fort Hood.

I encourage you to volunteer with your Company Family Readiness Group (FRG). It is a super way to get out and be with other families, to share time, laugh, and see how others are working their way through this deployment. Communications and interaction are a powerful tool to cope with loneliness or uncertainty. Telephone calls and personal exchanges during FRG socials go a long way to making a week pass quickly.

Our Soldiers continue at an incredible tempo by supporting stability operations in Iraq. This includes countless movements of ground forces, and their cargo, from all branches of coalition militaries. They conduct direct combat operations against anti-Iraqi forces in support of our infantry brethren. As CSM Long and I tell the Soldiers, every duty position in this battalion is essential to our success. They all perform a crucial role as aircrew members, medics, staff, fuelers, food service specialists, ground and aviation mechanics and staff.

I wish all of you a steadfast summer of safety. The leave program is a super success. I ask that you not try to catch up on 6 months of separation in 15 days. Take it all in stride, and don't over commit to life in the fast lane with boating, cars, motorcycles or alcohol. By doing this leave right, we ensure to have years of future fun with our loved ones. I request that you remind your Soldier home on leave this very same thing, watch over him or her! No accidents or incidents thru safety, solid planning and performing to the values as established by the Soldier's Creed.

A wonderful summer vacation to all, regards

LTC Mike Gawkins,  
Comanche 06

This 3-4 AVN newsletter contains official information and complies with the provisions of AR 360-81, AR 25-51, and Ft Hood's MOI for dissemination of newsletters.

The content of this newsletter has been screened and does not contain any classified material.

MICHAEL J. GAWKINS  
LTC, AV  
Commanding



### Command Sergeant Major's "AO"

"Comanche Pride!" Greetings to all Soldiers and to our cherished loved ones back home! Welcome all to the warmer weather that can only be categorized as "Iraq Hot!" and "Fort Hood Hot!" The Soldiers of this great battalion are persevering through an austere and extreme environment that, along with the heat, brings lots of blowing dust, and an occasional rain storm (yes it does rain in Iraq)! What a better place is there to show America what your troops can overcome and what it is that Comanches do best?

The Soldiers continue to impress LTC Gawkins and myself daily. Each and every Comanche is a member of a proud team that gets the job done to standard maintaining the battalion's helicopter fleet and ground support vehicles. By doing so, the Comanche Battalion is integral in keeping our fighting forces off of the many dangerous road networks and minimizing the risk of serious harm caused by the insurgency that is resistant to making Iraq a better place and safer place for the good of the Iraqi people. Our successes in maintaining aircraft and providing the commanders with combat power has already equated to saving hundreds of American Soldiers and coalition forces. This simply does not just happen; it is guaranteed to happen because of the great Soldiers in this formation! Families, trust me when I say, "You all have a lot to be proud of!"

I want to extend a personal "thank you" to all of our wonderful Army family who remains back home supporting our Soldiers daily. Without your care, thoughts, and constant communication via a phone line or computer connection, we simply could not perform in the excellent manner that we do. Your actions can never be underestimated to the success you contribute to our mission being conducted here in Iraq. All Comanches share in the awe of your selfless-service

and daily sacrifices that you do every day to keep things running alive and well on the home front. Joyce and I understand that being a military spouse can be both rewarding and challenging, as we both have discovered over the past 21 plus years. It takes, among other characteristics, dedication, patience, commitment, and personal strength. Being separated from your Soldier and maintaining a household is not an easy task and your Soldier recognizes the many sacrifices you make daily while keeping it all together. Because it is not easy I urge to you remain connected to your Family Readiness Group to communicate your challenges and share tips for remaining successful as we move towards our mid-way point on this deployment. The FRG can be a great way to stay engaged and keep informed on the events that are occurring around the community and use the many resources that are provided on Fort Hood. Your FRG leaders have direct contact with the rear detachment command team who is there to assist you by any means necessary. The FRG leaders and participants back home are always looking for some new ideas to have fun and help pass time through the summer months. Please contact Jo-Ann or Joyce and your company representatives to share in the social events, planning meetings, and to get out and meet others who may be going through some of those same challenges or rewarding experiences that you are.

As always remain safe. The summer months can not only be fun, they can present some situations that require your special attention towards preventing accidents. Plan accordingly when participating in outdoor activities and remember, "Don't Be Stupid!" Take care of one another and we look forward to a magnificent reunion in the months to follow.

CSM Bradley A. Long –  
Comanche 07

### Important Numbers

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## HQ Company “Black Dragons”

Dear Black Dragon Family and Friends,

Our Soldiers continue to do an excellent job supporting the Battalion mission to provide combat air assets to maneuver units in our area of responsibility. Our Soldiers truly function as a team and each section within the company contributes to our collective Battalion achievements. On a daily basis Black Dragons exude confidence and continue to exhibit the determination and professionalism that makes our combat operations here successful.

Our company continues to grow from our original 67 Soldiers, the Black Dragons now number 74 with the addition of SPCs Polk and Hiney. We are proud to count them in our numbers and they have done an excellent job assuming their new position in the Operations section.

In May we promoted PVTs Toledo and Roberson to PFC. In June we will send SPCs Thomas, White, Cruz, and Hernandez to the Sergeant Promotion Board. We will also send SGT Hollars and Gonzales to the Staff Sergeant Promotion Board. In June we will promote 6 Soldiers to Specialist, they are; PFC Bustos, Goodwin, Reyes, Stanley, Taajes, Musseau, and Lamsam. Each one of these fine Soldiers has proven their mettle by conducting a myriad of tasks and are truly deserving of their promotions.

The reenlistment's in our company is outstanding. We have reenlisted a total of 9 personnel. Days after arrival in country SPC Polk reenlisted for four more years. I am extremely proud of these Soldiers for exhibiting an unwavering commitment to the service to the Nation.

Daily, our company coordinates and conducts



SPC Reed on a Supply Run

combat operations. In addition to the synchronizing, planning, and the execution of these operations, we constantly conduct concurrent training to keep our combat skills sharp. In the past month we have had 9 Soldiers qualify in Close Quarters Marksmanship. Six Soldiers have qualified as Combat Life Savers, capable of providing emergency life saving techniques for combat related injuries. The company average for Army Physical Fitness Test is a 263. Weekly, the company conducts maintenance all our vehicles, digital equipment, and support equipment. The endstate of all concurrent training and proficiency in individual specialties allows for our company to successfully accomplish any combat operation assigned.

Many Soldiers have enrolled in college courses. Four Black Dragons have been studying to improve GT scores for future opportunities in the Army. SPC Embry was selected to represent our Company and attend a luncheon with CSM Buford Thomas, Chief Enlisted Non Commissioned Officer of the Aviation Branch.

On May 26 we will have a Company Barbeque and celebrate promotions and birthdays for the month of June. All of the Black Dragon Soldiers would like to thank the FRG for the heartfelt support you give us every month. Each month your birthday cakes, cards, and thoughts bring smiles to these warriors faces.

Our Soldiers set the example in all they do, their attitude and work ethic are exemplary. The 1SG and I are proud of their service and count ourselves lucky to command such great individuals. Thank you all for your support and prayers.

CPT Stephen Snyder & 1SG Scott Bailey  
Black Dragon 06 & 07



PFC Roberson, and PFC Leclerc finishing up the grueling Iraq 2 mile run



CPT Clyde, CW2 Wray, and 1SG Guillien  
hard at work in their CP

## Alpha Company "Tomahawks"

Dear Friends and Family of Alpha Company,

I would like to begin this letter by recognizing a few additions to the Tomahawk team. In February 2006 the Tomahawks added three new Warrant Officers to our ranks. CW3 Mike Pounds, CW2 Rob Bergeron, and WO1 Brent Bergfeld arrived in February and have made immediate impacts to our team. CW3 Pounds, a tracked maintenance test pilot, arrived from 21<sup>st</sup> CAV; CW2 Bergeron deployed with the 25<sup>th</sup> ID to Afghanistan, has progressed to Pilot in Command and is leading many of the Tomahawk missions; WO1 Bergfeld, a former SSG, has a greater appreciation for the differences between flight schools and a flight progression in a combat zone. In an attempt to provide some relief to our over-worked crew chiefs three door gunners were recently assigned; SGT Randy Belknap, PFC William Mace, and PFC Jeffrey Butts. Each door gunner is an internal battalion transfer; SGT Belknap is an aircraft refuel specialist assigned to Echo Company while PFC Mace and PFC Butts are aircraft mechanics from Delta Company.

As expected the Tomahawks continue to take the fight to the enemy, but we are also developing and sharpening our craft. CW2 Adam Thompson, CW2 Matt Diller, CPT Chris Clyde, and CW2 Bergeron have progressed to Pilot in Command with CW2 Aaron Hagist, CW2 Shane Denherder, and CW2 Josh Brackett on the way. Additionally, SPC Justin Gerhard, PFC Josh Knepper, SPC Jeff Keiper, and SPC Mark Lalli

have all progressed to fully qualified crew chiefs.

More good news to add; five months of the deployment are now a part of history. We look forward to each mission day, which brings the team closer to redeployment. Each Soldier has earned leave and a reunion with their family and friends; even if it is for two short weeks. Although I encourage as much fun, food, and festivities you and your family can handle try not to make up for the months of separation in two weeks. It may be possible, but it may lead to unwanted issues; focus on fun, family, and friends.

Although we are conducting sustainment operations I continue to do what is possible to ensure the safety of our aircrews; and, I will continue to do so throughout the deployment. Again five months are now gone. We have seven months to go; we will make it through this deployment together. I am very proud of our team and what we have accomplished. Please help me to make sure that your loved one knows what they are doing impacts the world.

Respectfully,

CPT Chris Clyde & 1SG Raul Guillen  
Tomahawk 06 & 07



Tomahawk aircraft running up before a night mission



## Bravo Company "Braves"

Hello again from Camp Taji, Iraq. It's been another busy three months...Since last time, we have seen part of our team deploy and return from Kalsu and many complete their environmental and morale leave.

We have seen the rain of winter turn into the sand and heat of spring. Now, we are heading towards the real heat of summer and the halfway point of our deployment. Throughout it all, our officers and Soldiers have excelled at every turn.

CPT McBride and SFC Frankenstein led a team in Kalsu and made it all look easy. Their great team of officers and Soldiers flew over 500 hours in support of Multinational Division Baghdad.

Our pilots continue to plan and fly missions in support of Multinational Division Baghdad. To date, they have safely and professionally flown over 2,900 hours. We were proud to promote WO1 Atterberry to CW2 on the sixth of May. Later in the month of May, we look forward to promoting our remaining WO1, Justin Sadeghian to CW2. Later in the year, we look forward to promoting CW2 Williams and CW2 Mills to CW3.

The crew chiefs continue the hard work of maintaining our aircraft and flying missions. They work long hours, rain, sand or shine and maintain our aircraft to the highest standard all the time, every time. On the first of March, we promoted SPC Hardin to SGT. Congratulations to SPC(P) Hawn for outstanding performance at the May promotion board. We are also proud to announce the following promotions effective 1 May: SPC Lopez and SPC Crook to SGT.

In March, we were sad to say goodbye to SSG



CPT McBride Reenlists SPC Murray



Braves aircrew avoiding a wall of dust

Holliday who will be a great asset to D Co and the battalion as a technical inspector and standardization instructor. We were glad to welcome the newest members of the Braves team: SPC Simpson, PFC Watte, and PFC Rodriguez. They came from E Co and will serve as helicopter door gunners.

Over the course of the last three months, we re-enlisted SPC Murray, SPC Morgan and SPC Eldridge. It is great for our unit and the US Army to retain such great Soldiers while America is at war and testimony to their character as men.

Our prayers go out to Shelbie Morgan daughter of SPC Morgan who continues to recover from an accident. For all of you who supported him and his family during their hours of need, thank you! It is greatly appreciated by this command.

We continue to send our great people on EML...to date we have had 13 Braves complete their EML. There continues to be questions about whether everyone will get environmental leave...everyone who deployed in December will get the opportunity to go on environmental and morale leave.

I continue to be amazed by the great Soldiers and officers and the positive attitude they bring with them on a daily basis no matter what the circumstances. This is not an easy business we do; it takes hard work, determination, and perseverance to do the nation's calling. The Braves and their families selflessly do this everyday. They sacrifice much for our Nation in a time of war. Thanks for your support and God bless.

CPT Robert Klarenbach & James Libbey  
Brave 06 & 07

## Charlie Company “Warrior Flight”

May brings the first anniversary of Charlie Company 3-4 Aviation. Since our activation on 29 April 2005 we’ve accomplished much, starting with a demanding training program that included two deployments to the field, an NTC rotation and many long hours at the office to a load out and deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom. This could only be accomplished with the special group of folks that are assigned to the company. I know the families carry a heavy burden for our successes and are grateful for your patience.

The Warriors are now in a steady battle rhythm and our time is flying by, we look forward to seeing our families again. Almost half of the Company has been able to take a short environmental leave break and the returning Soldiers bring new energy for those of us still waiting to go. As the summer months have arrived and outdoor activities will occupy much of our leave plans I ask that safety be considered.

The weather is heating up and what is now quite comfortable will soon become unbearable. It has been over 100° the last two weeks and the thermometer is rising, when the wind blows its like a hairdryer on low heat pointed at your face, in about a month it’ll be like a hairdryer on high heat, I can’t wait! Last week we experienced our second sandstorm. The first came very slowly and lasted about a day, the second was a wall of sand that you could see moving quickly across the horizon. Though all the aircraft needed to be washed afterwards it was a neat experience to watch a sunny day turn into the Mars landscape. We have a refrigerator in each office and a large freezer in the company area each well stocked with bottled water and Gatorade to help us fight the heat.



A Warrior Aircraft flies overhead keeping American Soldiers off the roads of Baghdad



SGT Stewart heads out to the Aircraft

Our mission has not changed and we continue to perform it very well, keeping our fellow Soldiers off of the Iraqi roads and conducting Air Assaults on the enemy remain our focus. Our crew chiefs continue to provide superior maintenance and with repair parts readily available our aircraft remain in top condition. Our Aviation Life Support Soldiers have installed a cooling system on the aircraft and we’ve been issued cooling vests that keep the flights a little more comfortable.

First Sergeant’s mail call is still the high point of everyone’s day and we’d like to thank you for your continued support, I know it will sustain through the second half of our deployment.

Regards,

Spencer M. Anderson and Michael T. Davis  
Warrior 06 & 07





PFC Smith delivering parts on the Trike

## Delta Company "Darkriders"

Dear Family and Friends of the Darkrider Team,

Another month has sped by on this deployment, and the Soldiers here continue their outstanding performance in service to their nation. This month has shown a continual increase in temperature. I would say that spring has sprung, but unfortunately I don't believe that season exists here, we have been thrown into summer. Daily highs routinely reach 100 degrees, with occasional spikes higher. Luckily, water and sunblock are in plentiful supply and our Darkriders morale is superb.

Our maintenance platoon is in the process of building a small insulated room in the hangar where they will be able to put an air conditioner and get a respite from the temperature. This project has been led by our in-house Bob Villa wanna-be, 1LT Horsefall. In a matter of days this project should be complete and they will have their own shack, replete with a window and insulation.

Everybody here remains engaged in the maintenance efforts, and the team continues to grow, learn and triumph. These Soldiers are getting 3-5 years maintenance experience in a short 12 months. I must comment that the efforts of our senior warrant officers and non-commissioned officers have been instrumental in managing, coaching and teaching through the myriad of jobs that we must accomplish daily. Right now we are working on our fourth phase in country and all of our sections have become quite adept at the tasks that accompany this teardown and rebuild procedure.

The Darkriders continue to grow as we have recently received five new Soldiers; SPC Castro, PFC Clark, PV2 Vredenburg, PV2 Gentleman, and PV2 Hostleton. They are all adapting very well and have integrated into the team nicely. SPC Avalos is departing for warrant officer candidate school this month and we'll all be sorry to see him leave. We wish him well and hope to see him soon as a newly minted warrant.

We recently held a company barbeque to celebrate everything we have done so far. The first sergeant and the platoon sergeants put it together and it was a nice time to relax, take a breath, enjoy some hotdogs and hamburgers, and recognize everything we have done thus far.

As always, I am awed by the efforts, drive and motivation that the Soldiers, NCOs, and officers demonstrate daily despite the austere conditions. I know that they maintain the traditions of our great county and its warriors that have fought valiantly on countless battlefields. They are truly our nations best and the support that they receive from home is vital to what they do. Thank you all for your continued sacrifices and for entrusting myself and the First Sergeant with those you treasure most.

Sincerely,

CPT Buck Anderson & 1SG Douglas Howell  
Darkrider 06 & 07



Darkriders walk in an aircraft for Maintenance



## Echo Company "Warpath"

Greetings Warpath Family,

I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize our Echo FRG for all the hard work that it has done by keeping the home fires burning for our deployed Soldiers. Everyone is doing a fantastic job, but I would like to take this time to recognize a few individuals. First, my wife, Cindy for being nominated and winning one of the Volunteer of the Year awards for 4ID. Just being recognized is a tribute to all the hard work she has done for our FRG and it could not have been possible without all of your help and support. That being said, I would also like to recognize a few key spouses who have gone above and beyond. Cindy McElroy for all the hard work and support she has given to our FRG, especially working a full time job. Cindy McElroy was nominated and won volunteer of the month for March for the Combat Aviation Brigade. Stephanie Wheeler, the Echo FRG treasurer, was nominated and won both the Combat Aviation Brigade and 4ID Volunteer of the Month for May. A few other individuals deserving of recognition who are helping out in any way they can are; April Hollis, Blair Neddo, Christina Westly, Amanda Lohrum, Sephronia Hopkins, and Shannon Thompson as the Echo FRG secretary. Although not recognized in an official capacity, they have still contributed enormously to make our FRG great. What can I say other than our company's Soldiers are truly blessed to have such a caring and devoted support base back in the rear. Again, thank you all for all the hard work you do.

Special thanks go out to everyone for all the hard work and time to put together the Easter cellophane bags and candy eggs. A lot of the Soldiers, especially some of the single ones, really appreciated and enjoyed them, especially the 'Nerds'. PFC Crowell and I made the rounds and passed them out to the Soldiers while wearing bunny ears and whiskers. We caught a little 'flack', but I figured since you all put forth the time and energy to pack all those eggs and



PFC Hopkins lifting some weights



ECO Soldiers installing a HEMTT engine

cello bags with candy the very least I could do was pass them out.

There have been two new arrivals to the Echo Company family since our last newsletter and I am proud to welcome these new babies into the Warpath family. PFC and April Hollis have a new baby boy, James Hollis and LT and Diane Friel with their new baby boy, Mark Andrew Friel Jr.

Our ground maintenance section still maintains the highest Organizational Readiness rate in the entire Combat Aviation Brigade at 100%. The maintenance platoon just finished replacing a HEMTT engine and over 10 direct support job orders. The platoon works daily to maintain this standard and still pulls the brunt of the battalion's guard force mission.

POL Platoon has surpassed 1/2 million gallons of fuel issued since assuming mission at Camp Taji and they have not even taken over the BIAP mission yet where they are projected to issue over a million gallons. They continue to work 24 hour operations ensuring our helicopters have fuel to fly in support of ground forces in our area of operations. These helicopters have moved over 40,000 Soldiers from one FOB to another so these Soldiers do not have to move by ground. The POL platoon continues to set the standard for the brigade and receive accolades on a regular basis.

POL and Motor Pool have built a mini horseshoe's pit next to the infamous ping-pong table and have begun tossing oversized washers in their spare time and after duty hours. Rumors are in the air that a dart board may make an appearance and then I'm sure the 'smack talk' between the platoons will commence in earnest.

In closing, I'd like to again thank everyone for all your support and a special thank you for those of you who chose to not stay in the Fort Hood area but still continue to support our Soldiers during this deployment.

CPT Roger Wayne & 1SG Mitchell McElroy  
Warpath 06 & 07